



# Another Day, Another Crisis:

Recession, Wildfires, Boycotts...  
*What's Next?!?*

Arizona Office of Tourism  
High Country Conference Center, Flagstaff, AZ

November 16, 2010

***Presented by Peggy Bendel  
President***

**Bendel Communications International**  
Results-oriented marketing solutions for destinations, hotels & tour operators worldwide

# Bendel Communications International

- **Results-oriented marketing solutions for destinations, hotels and tour operators worldwide**
- **Team of senior professionals in PR, marketing, branding, media coaching, partnership marketing and communications strategy**
- **Founder was part of the original I Love NY team**
- **25 years heading the tourism practice at DCI, the leader in marketing places**
- **Worked with more than 50 countries, states, CVBs, regions and Chambers of Commerce since 1985**

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# Our Client Experience



The Official New York State Tourism Website



PETER SOMMER  
TRAVELS



Metro Portland Tourism Alliance of Oregon



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# What *IS* a Crisis?

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機

Both danger – and  
opportunity, according  
to traditional Chinese  
wisdom

# What *IS* a Crisis?

- Hurricane Hugo, USVI 1989
- South Africa in 1993 and beyond
- Oklahoma City, April 19, 1995
- Hotel Murder/Suicide, July 1997
- **9/11/01**
- **SARS 2003**
- Hurricane Katrina 2005-present
- **Economic downturn**
- **H1N1 Virus**
- **Meetings at Resorts**
- **SB 1070 Boycott**

# 1. Don't panic!

And don't *appear* panicked or uncertain in front of your staff, your boss or client – or the media.



## 2. Gather Your Team, Launch Your Plan

The most important element of any plan is your ***Contact list:***

- **Who** does what?
- **Where** do I find them  
(even if the power is out  
and it's Sunday)?



Date Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Massachusetts Client/Crisis List**

Please be as complete as possible. Do not use PO BOX for address fields. Make sure to indicate suite, floor or apartment numbers. Please fax to 212/213-3827, or e-mail to Karyl.barnes@dc-intl.com. Thank you!

***All information will be kept confidential within the Crisis Communications Committee.***

I am the (please check one) \_\_\_\_ Primary \_\_\_\_ Back-up contact for my organization.

COMPANY: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME/TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICE ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

HOME ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(AREA CODE/NUMBER FOR ALL BELOW, PLEASE)

OFFICE PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICE FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

CELL PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

PAGER: \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICE E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

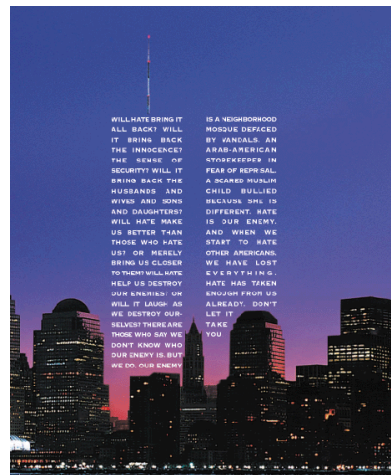
ADDITIONAL: \_\_\_\_\_



# 3. Know which crisis is *yours*

## 9/11

Different aspects of the same crisis in New York, in Washington, in Texas, in the Berkshires and Boston...



## 4. Be proactive

- **Don't wait for the media to call you:** they may find another source, and you may not agree with their choice
- **Issue a factual statement,** include 24/7 contact information, and name/title of spokesperson

# Be Prepared with Background/Talking Points

- Business travel creates 2.4 million jobs. Meetings and events are directly responsible for 1 million American jobs.
- Business travel accounts for \$240 billion in spending and \$39 billion in tax revenue at the federal, state, and local levels.
- The U.S. Travel Association estimates that 200,000 travel jobs were lost in 2008 and expects another 247,000 to be lost in 2009.
- Each meeting and event traveler spends an average of \$1,000 per trip.
- A new study shows that 87% of Americans who have attended an out-of-town meeting or convention for work say it is important to running a strong business.

## 5. Make the power of the Internet/new media work *for you*

- Launch your site's shadow crisis page, Twitter account and Intranet
- Tweet when there is news, but no less than once daily
- Indicate time/date of current - and next - update
- Work your social media network, on LinkedIn, Facebook, Plaxo, etc.

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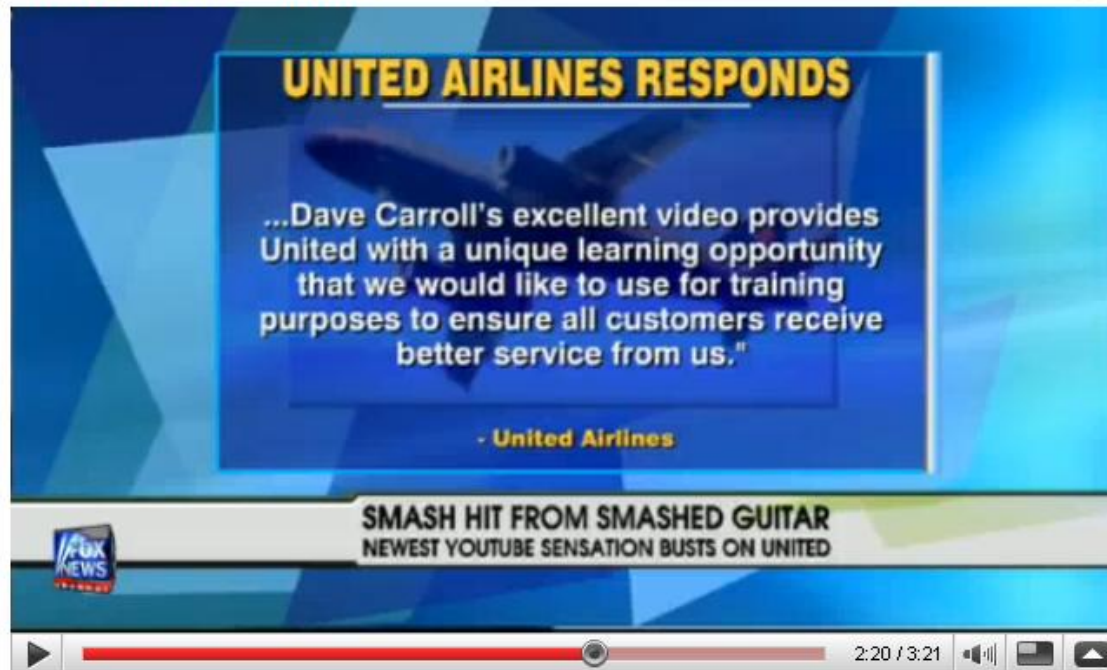
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'United Breaks Guitars'



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[sethcat99](#) (6 minutes ago)

[Reply](#)

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[Whole Lot Lighter - Sons Of Maxwell](#)  
59,368 views

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## 6. Continually monitor media coverage

- Correct factual errors promptly, calmly and courteously, because “Now is forever.” Be part of the dialog: if you are not, you are tacitly agreeing with the story.
- Check twitter, CNN/MSN web sites, search engines i.e. Google - and blogs. “Us” with cell phone cameras are today’s “news crew”
- Everything is archived, to be called up on anniversaries, when there is a similar crisis, and whenever curiosity hits!



## **Va. Tech more secure a year after massacre**

BLACKSBURG, Va. — One year after a disturbed student killed 32 people and himself, Virginia Tech appears as tranquil as ever. A day before the anniversary of the massacre, students wearing their signature orange Hokie sweatshirts strolled on a rolling green quad





# The New York Times

August 27, 2010

NEW ORLEANS — This city, not that long ago, appeared to be lost. Only five years have passed since corpses were floating through the streets, since hundreds of thousands of survivors sat in hotel rooms and shelters and the homes of relatives, learning from news footage that they were among the ranks of the homeless.





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## 7. Be consistent

- Use the same spokesperson, if possible
- Hold briefings/issue statements on a schedule (daily, AM/PM, hourly)
- Release information to **all** media simultaneously

# Crisis OVER!

- Breathe sigh of relief
- High-five your team
- Go home and get some sleep
- Update your Crisis Communications Plan -***NOW!!!***



# Crisis Communications “To Do’s”

- Videotaped media training is a MUST for every spokesperson
- Annually:
  - Review your ‘what if?’ scenarios
  - Review your communications team
- Semiannually: Update your contact list and distribute to all team members

# In-House Team or Outside PR Firm?

Ideally, **both!**

**In-house team:** Knows the landscape and the players

**Outside firm:** Broad crisis experience, strong media contacts

If no full-time firm, choose a partner and establish a relationship **NOW**

# Communicate, communicate, communicate!

## External/Product

- Key brand messages
- New developments and product
- Trends
- Characters/stories

## Internal/Organizational

- Key accomplishments
- Key personnel changes
- Key accomplishments
- Needed legislation or positions
- Personalities/stories

**Always address**

**“What does it mean to me?”**

(consumer, meeting planner, politician, meeting planner, journalist)

# Leverage the Power of Many

- Recognize that few legislators understand the tourism industry
- Even fewer members of the public do so
- Repetition of key messages essential
- Work with the Arizona Tourism Alliance, AzHLA, AzOT, local CVBs, AZ Restaurant Assn, US Travel Assn and other industry organizations
- Mobilize supporters within and outside the industry: Rotary, Chambers of Commerce

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**Thank you!**

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\*North Carolina\*Oregon\*Sydney***